



THE CALIFORNIA LEGISLATIVE BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON AUTISM

*“Supporting individuals with autism and their families:
forging new directions for real change”*

COMMISSIONERS

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A Distinctive Opportunity to Lead the State & the Nation

Importance of the Commission:

- ◆ The current autism epidemic is presently a tremendous public health crisis.
- ◆ Research indicates that early identification and intervention can result in significant positive outcomes for many children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD.)
- ◆ Currently there are significant gaps in the diagnosis, assessment and treatment of individuals with ASD and in supportive services for their families. Further, these programs are often fragmented, difficult to access and lack coordination across major systems of care.
- ◆ Systems of care are not prepared to address the challenges associated with the increasing number of children who are being identified with ASD each year.
- ◆ Given that over 80% of individuals with ASD are under 22 years of age, current systems of care are not prepared for the aging out of this population who will need to transition successfully into community-based settings.

Unique Nature of the Commission:

- ◆ The legislation that established the Commission was authored by Senator Perata, President Pro Tem and supported by Assembly Speaker Nunez. This legislation passed with strong bipartisan support and without a dissenting vote.
- ◆ The members appointed to the Commission bring a broad and diverse array of experiences and expertise.
- ◆ The Commission is supported by multidisciplinary Taskforces that represent a broad range of professional experts, advocates, families of individuals with ASD, non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders.
- ◆ The Commission provides an important opportunity to collaborate with other State agencies and departments.
- ◆ The Commission's recommendations will be linked to and implemented by subsequent legislative actions.
- ◆ The Commission will provide recommendations that respond to the needs of underserved communities and are culturally appropriate.

New Approaches to Autism Spectrum Disorders:

- ◆ The Commission will provide important recommendations to ensure the effective and appropriate early identification of young children with ASD.
- ◆ The Commission will provide recommendations that focus on positive approaches (i.e. functional and strength-based) for individuals with ASD across the lifespan and in the most appropriate settings.
- ◆ The Commission, through its findings, recommendations, and outreach, will provide effective bridges between validated best-practices and systems of care while also promoting the development and implementation of appropriate outcome measures.
- ◆ The Commission will provide recommendations that will identify and close gaps in existing systems of care, thereby, improving services and increasing opportunities for Californians with Autism Spectrum Disorders.